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Message Text

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17
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 /082 W
---------- 060347
R 041530Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4929
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
USMISSION USUN NY
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SF, PINT, MILI, PINS
SUBJ: DEFENSE AMENDMENT BILL

REF: CAPE TOWN 0080

1. SUMMARY: SOUTH AFRICA IS TO ABANDON LEGAL PROHIBITION ON ITS TROOPS SERVING OUTSIDE NATION'S BORDERS WITHOUT FIRST VOLUNTEERING. DECISION MEANS THAT IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY TO REDEFINE SOUTH AFRICA AS "AFRICA SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR" FOR MILITARY OPERATIONAL PURPOSES AS PROPOSED IN DEFENSE AMENDMENT BILL CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION (REFTEL). END SUMMARY.

2. AS REFTEL INDICATED CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN LEGISLA-
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TION HOLDS THAT NO MEMBER OF ARMED SERVICES CAN BE COM-

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PELLED TO FIGHT OUTSIDE OF SOUTH AFRICA. THIS IS
LEGACY OF COLONIAL DAYS AND ESPECIALLY WW II WHEN MANY
AFRIKANERS WERE UNWILLING TO DEFEND WHAT THEY VIEWED AS
BRITISH INTERESTS ELSEWHERE IN WORLD. IN ORDER TO CONFORM
WITH LAW ALL SOUTH AFRICAN SERVICEMEN WHO ENTERED ANGOLA
REPORTEDLY OR THEORETICALLY SIGNED DOCUMENTS VOUCHING
TO VOLUNTARY STATUS OF THEIR BORDER CROSSING. IN ORDER TO
RECTIFY CUMBERSOME SITUATION AND PREPARE FOR FUTURE
BORDER HOSTILITIES, SAG INTRODUCED AS PART OF DEFENSE
AMENDMENT BILL CLAUSE WHICH SIMPLY REDEFINES SOUTH AFRICA
TO MEAN "AFRICA SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR".

3. PROGRESSIVE-REFORM PARTY (PRP) HAS OPPOSED NEW LEGISLA-
TION ON GROUNDS THAT NEW DEFINITION OF SOUTH AFRICA WOULD
COMPROMISE POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION,
UNNECESSARILY PROVOKE AFRICAN STATES AND PERHAPS
ULTIMATELY BE MISUSED AS "LICENSE TO INTERVENE". UNITED
PARTY WARMLY SUPPORTS BILL BUT ARGUES THAT TERRITORIAL
LIMITATION UNNECESSARY AND THAT SAG FORCES SHOULD HAVE
OPTION OF OPERATION ANYWHERE IN WORLD AS OCCASIONS DEMAND.

4. MIN DEFENCE BOTHA ANNOUNCED IN PARLIAMENT FEB 3 THAT
UP IDEA A GOOD ONE AND THAT, IN EFFECT, INTENT TO REDEFINE
"SOUTH AFRICA" AS WELL AS WHOLE CONCEPT OF TERRITORIAL
LIMITATIONS WOULD BE ELIMINATED IN NEW AMENDMENTS TO
BILL UNDER CONSIDERATION.

5. COMMENT: NATIONAL PARTY (NP) GOVERNMENT RARELY
PUBLICLY ADOPTS IDEAS PROPOSED BY PARLIAMENTARY
OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, AS INDICATED BY VORSTER'S SPEECH
DURING NO-CONFIDENCE DEBATE, NP ACTIVELY WOOING UP TO
CREATE BIPARTISAN FRONT ON ISSUES OF DEFENCE AND
INTERANL SECURITY. IN ADDITION TO COMPLEMENTING UP BY
ACCEPTING ITS IDEA, SAG PROBABLY ALSO MOTIVATED BY REALIZA-
TION THAT TERRITORIAL RESTRICTIONS DISPOSABLE VESTIGIAL
REMAIN OF COLONIAL PAST. THOUGH IT WILL NEVER STATE SO
PUBLICLY, SAG ALSO PROBABLY INFLUENCED BY PRP ARGUMENT
THAT TO REDEFINE SOUTH AFRICA IN MANNER WHICH LEGISLATION
HAD SUGGESTED WOULD UNNECESSARILY RAISE HACKLES OF AFRICAN
STATES.
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NNN

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To: STATE
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